

# AGROCHEMICALS ON YOUR FARM: SAFETY

Man-Made and Technological Threats



Agricultural chemicals (agrochemicals) are commonly found on farms and in rural communities. This can include any number of products, from pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers to diesel fuel or disinfectant products. Many of these products can be hazardous if used inappropriately. Follow these guidelines to stay safe when using chemical products on the farm.

## Agrochemical Usage Safety

- **Always read packaging labels, as it will tell you:**
  - Proper use of product
  - Proper handling procedures
  - Safe storage instructions
  - First aid information
- **Obtain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all chemical that you use.**
  - These contain health hazard and handling information, and spill or leak procedures.
  - Have copies near the chemical storage area; keep an additional set in a separate location.
- **Prevent injury and exposure.**
  - Guard against splashes, spills and skin contact when mixing, handling and applying chemicals.
  - At a minimum, wear, long pants, long sleeves (or coveralls) and enclosed shoes.
  - Wear additional protective equipment as recommended by the label. This may include: chemical-resistant gloves, goggles and/or face shield and an approved respirator.
  - Avoid inhaling sprays, dust and vapors.
  - Launder chemical-soiled clothing separately from other laundry and triple rinse.
- **Preparation and application safety measures.**
  - Mix and prepare products in a well-ventilated area.
  - Use only the amount and concentration specified by the label.
  - Do not mix different products unless allowed by label directions.
  - Keep children and pets away when mixing and applying chemicals.
- **In case of exposure,**
  - If chemicals get into your eyes, follow emergency directions on the label. Flush eyes with water for 10-15 minutes and get medical attention.
  - If you accidentally swallow the chemical or become ill shortly after use, call your health care provider or get medical attention immediately! Take the chemical label with you.

- If a chemical gets on your skin:
  - Immediately remove all contaminated clothing;
  - Wash the exposed area, including hair, with generous amounts of water and soap.
  - Put on fresh, clean clothes.
  - See your healthcare provider immediately.

## Chemical Storage Safety

- **Limit storage areas to the minimum needed to discourage storing unneeded chemicals.**
- **Store chemical in a secure area.**
  - Keep chemicals in locked, weather proof storage areas. Make sure these areas are well lit.
  - Post a sign indicating the storage area contains chemicals. The sign should also include at least 2 emergency contact numbers – yours and local emergency response (e.g., law enforcement or fire).
  - Keep storage areas dry and well ventilated; keep it from freezing and extreme high temperatures.
  - Store chemicals above ground level to prevent moisture problems (rusting or disintegration).
  - Locate storage areas at a safe site that will not be subjected to flooding.
  - Keep chemicals out of reach of children and pets.
- **Store chemicals in their original containers.**
  - Keep containers tightly closed and clearly labeled.
  - If labels become worn or damaged, re-label the container with its contents or discard the chemical.
  - Do not store chemicals in damaged containers.
  - Never use food or beverage containers to store chemicals.

## Disposal Safety

- **Do not pour chemicals down any drain, toilet, sink or storm drain.**
- **Do not dispose of empty containers or extra chemicals where they may be a hazard to fish, wildlife, domestic animals or water sources.**
- **Do not save or reuse empty chemical containers.**

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